/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special compartment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the [233] cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

• 354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the [252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the [415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is 352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the 415 utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat 412 stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family 585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

A [754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

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3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZ\Ii\hZhq

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswá* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsh'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (ə'). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskoe Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.